

# **PSC Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Nova Scotians**

## **Policy Statement**

The Public Service Commission is committed to ensuring that persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing benefit equally from services offered to the general public and will make reasonable accommodations for the provision of interpreter services.

## **Definitions**

Interpreter services may be provided through a variety of mediums and these are outlined in the Appendix to this policy.

## **Policy Objectives**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure reasonable steps are taken to provide services to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing in a fair and non-discriminatory manner through the provision of interpreter services.

## **Application**

This policy applies to all divisions of the Public Service Commission.

## **Policy Directives**

- The Public Service Commission will make reasonable accommodation for the provision of interpreter services to ensure effective communication in the delivery of government services to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- To ensure effective communication in the delivery of government services to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing, consideration will be given to factors such as:
  - the complexity and importance of the information to be communicated
  - the context in which the communication takes place.
- The Public Service Commission will make reasonable accommodation to provide interpreter services in the job interview process.

- Divisions of the Public Service Commission may create and implement their own procedures relating to the provision of interpreter services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing Nova Scotians. Any such procedures will conform with the policy objectives and directives of the Public Service Commission policy.
- Agencies, boards, and commissions for which the Minister of the Public Service Commission is responsible shall implement their own policies relating to the provision of interpreter services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing Nova Scotians, if appropriate. Any such policies will conform with the policy objectives and directives of the Public Service Commission policy.

### **Accountability**

The Minister/Public Service Commissioner is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

### **Monitoring**

The Public Service Commission shall review this policy and any procedures created and implemented by departmental divisions on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with the Government of Nova Scotia Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Nova Scotians.

### **References**

Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*

Government of Nova Scotia Affirmative Action Policy

Government of Nova Scotia Fair Hiring Policy

Government of Nova Scotia Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Nova Scotians

**Enquiries**

Strategic Support Services, Public Service Commission (902) 424-2302

**Appendix**

Appendix - Definitions

**Last Updated July 26, 2006**

# **PSC Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Nova Scotians**

## **Appendix - Definitions**

**The following definitions are provided for the understanding and proper implementation of this Policy:**

### **American Sign Language (ASL)**

A visual gestural language with its own linguistic structure and grammar; the language used by most Deaf people in the U.S. and Canada.

### **Computerized note-taking**

One form of technical assistance provided to persons who are hard of hearing or late deafened. Computer note-takers are commonly used in large-group or educational settings. A hearing person sits beside the hard-of-hearing or late-deafened person and types information verbatim onto a laptop computer. The user of this service then reads the screen as information is being written and is thus able to more fully participate. When a group is relying on this service, information can be projected onto a large overhead screen for all to view simultaneously.

### **Deaf**

In recent years the capital “D” Deaf has emerged as the name preferred by people who identify with, and belong to, a group with a culture distinct from that of non-Deaf people. Like any cultural group, Deaf people have a language and set of social norms, behaviours, and folklore that reflect the values of their group.

### **deaf**

When written, “small-d” deaf is becoming more accepted as a reference to a hearing deficit only and detached from any discussion of culture and/or language. One term represents a social-cultural perspective and the other a medical-pathological view.

### **Deaf-Blind**

Describes a person who is unable to hear and unable to see. However, very few deaf-blind people are both profoundly deaf and totally blind.

### **Hard-of-hearing**

A person who is unable to follow a conversation between three or more people without the assistance of a hearing aid.

### **HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

A diagnosed auditory deficit ranging from mild to profound that may or may not respond to medical intervention or amplification and that results in functional limitations in one or more areas of daily living.

### **Interpretation**

The process of changing a message from one language to another, conveying all essential elements of meaning and

maintaining dynamic equivalence.

**Intervener**

A person who provides interpretation, orientation, and mobility services to a person who is deaf-blind.

**Late Deafened**

Describes a person who becomes deafened later in life due to illness, accident, disease, or the normal process of aging.

**Translation**

The process of changing a message in a “frozen form” (written, videotape, audiotape) of one language to a “frozen form” of another language.